



## **Task Force on Traffic Capacity Across the Chesapeake Bay**

### **Meeting #2 Summary**

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#### **Introduction**

The second of five meetings of the Task Force on Traffic Capacity Across the Chesapeake Bay (Task Force) was held on Thursday, June 23rd 2005 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM in Annapolis, Maryland. The Task Force was appointed by Secretary Flanagan in January 2005 to help identify and understand the need for capacity across the Chesapeake Bay, in light of the growing congestion on the existing Bay Bridge. Two co-chairs, Senator Lowell Stoltzfus and Jim Lighthizer, were selected by Secretary Flanagan to lead and facilitate the Task Force meetings. In addition, 19 Task Force members and six Ex-Officio Task Force members were appointed by the Secretary.

Co-chairs Senator Stoltzfus and Jim Lighthizer, and 16 Task Force members, or their alternates, as well as the seven Ex-Officio members attended Meeting #2:

- Lon Anderson, Director of Government Relations, AAA Mid-Atlantic
- John S. Arnick, Maryland House of Delegates, District 6
- John C. Astle, Senate of Maryland, District 30
- Walter T. Coryell, Chestertown Chief of Police
- Jeffrey Frank, President and CEO, Patton Harris Rust & Associates, pc
- Janet Greenip, Senate of Maryland, District 33
- Mary Ann Love, Maryland House of Delegates, District 32
- James N. Mathias, Jr., Mayor of Ocean City
- Anthony J. O'Donnell, Maryland House of Delegates, District 29
- E. J. Pipkin, Senate of Maryland, District 36
- Susan Ellsworth Shaw, Calvert County Commissioner
- Richard A. Sossi, Maryland House of Delegates, District 36
- Walter Thompson, former President and CEO, Maryland Motor Truck Association
- W. Gregory Wims, President and CEO, Hammer and Nails, Inc.

#### Ex-Officio Members

- Robert L. Flanagan, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation
- C. Ronald Franks, Secretary, Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Trent M. Kittleman, Executive Secretary, Maryland Transportation Authority
- Martin G. Madden, Chairman, Critical Area Commission
- Kendl P. Philbrick, Secretary, Maryland Department of the Environment, and
- Jim Rzepkowski, Assistant Secretary Rural Region, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development.



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The following Task Force members were not in attendance. However, Task Force members were encouraged to send representatives if they could not attend. Representatives (if in attendance) are shown in parentheses:

- Sonny Bloxom, President of the Worcester County Commissioners (Gerald Mason)
- William H. Cox, Jr., Maryland Transportation Commissioner
- Dorchester County Councilmember Effie M. Elzey
- H. Victoria Goldsborough, Denton Councilwoman
- Effie M. Elzey, Dorchester County Councilmember (Delegate Addie Eckardt)
- Rona E. Kramer, Senate of Maryland, District 14 (Anne MacKinnon-Welsh), and
- Audrey E. Scott, Secretary (Jim Noonan).

All Task Force meetings are open to the public. According to the sign-in sheet from the meeting, 6 citizens attended Meeting #2. The meeting was also videotaped for broadcast on several local access channels. A copy of the videotape can also be made available upon request.

### **Agenda for Meeting #2**

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks (Jim Lighthizer and Secretary Flanagan)
2. Review of Meeting # 1 and Goals of Meeting #2 (Jim Lighthizer)
3. Lessons Learned from other "Mega Projects" (Dennis Simpson)
4. Potential Bridge Features and Construction (Geoffrey Kolberg)
5. Travel Demand and Highway Infrastructure Issues (Neil Pedersen)
6. Preview of Meeting # 3 (Jim Lighthizer)
7. Closing and Questions (Jim Lighthizer)

The format of the meeting was based on a dual screen Powerpoint slide presentation (attached), which was made available electronically and in hardcopy to all attendees. The presentation can be downloaded from the project website at [www.mdt.state.md.us/mdta](http://www.mdt.state.md.us/mdta). Task Force members asked a variety of questions during the meeting, and many were answered during the presentation. This summary highlights select comments by Task Force members and includes all requests for additional information.

#### **1. Welcome and Opening Remarks (Jim Lighthizer and Secretary Flanagan)**

Task Force Co-Chair Jim Lighthizer began the meeting by handing out the updated Table of Contents with Chapter 2, a new contact information sheet with a new Task Force member and the presentations and technical materials for Meeting # 2. Secretary Flanagan introduced new Task Force member Jeffrey Frank, Ph.D., President of Patton Harris Rust &



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Associates (PHR+A), a planning and engineering firm based in Chantilly, VA. Mr. Frank has done extensive planning for development and local government and was the Deputy Planning Director for Anne Arundel County in the 1970's.

#### **2. Review of Meeting # 1 and Goals of Meeting #2 (Jim Lighthizer)**

Mr. Lighthizer recognized that the Task Force members and their constituents are keenly aware of the capacity issues of the existing Bay Bridge and also the rehabilitation of the existing spans. During the Task Force meetings, a Zone approach is being used to present technical information that could potentially be considered for a new Chesapeake Bay crossing.

Jim Lighthizer outlined the goals of Meeting # 2, to discuss lessons learned; bridge features and construction; and capacity issues, travel demand, and existing roadway infrastructure.

#### **3. Lessons Learned from other "Mega Projects" (Dennis Simpson)**

Dennis Simpson, Deputy Director of Capital Planning for the Maryland Transportation Authority, drew from local and other experiences with constructing large "Mega Projects." He noted three critical factors that must be addressed early in the process, identifying stakeholders, environmental issues and engineering considerations. Maryland is a national leader in the environmental streamlining process, working with local, state and federal agencies. The Authority and SHA are experienced with developing projects of this magnitude. Mr. Simpson described Maryland's experiences with the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, the proposed Intercounty Connector (ICC), and I-95 (from the Baltimore City line to the Delaware line). Responding to Senator Stoltzfus' request for a relative cost of these projects, SHA Administrator Neil Pedersen and Mr. Simpson gave the costs as \$2.45 billion for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, \$2.4 billion for the ICC, and \$830 million for I-95. The discussion ended with a comparison of the number of vehicles projected to use each roadway. Woodrow Wilson Bridge would have 200,000-300,000 average daily trips (ADT), the ICC would have 100,000-120,000 ADT and I-95 would have 150,000 ADT.

#### **4. Potential Bridge Features and Construction (Geoffrey Kolberg)**

Geoffrey V. Kolberg, P.E., Executive Director, Engineering and Construction Management at the Maryland Transportation Authority, began by answering a key question, "Can the existing bridges be widened?" Neither bridge was designed to accommodate widening. However, the existing bridges will be maintained regardless of construction of a new bridge. Mr. Kolberg identified the submerged ancient Susquehanna River channel as an element that complicates bridge construction. He reiterated that no particular zone has been selected. Additional considerations are type of channel substrate that support the pilings and protection of piles



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from vessel collisions. Size of vessels coming into the Bay is already limited by the existing Bay Bridges and the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore.

Senator Greenip requested follow up information on the possibility of using a double deck bridge. Mr. Kolberg noted that double deck bridges pose a difficulty in repairs to the bottom of the top deck due to traffic on the lower deck. Delegate O'Donnell asked that ferry service be considered to mitigate traffic on the existing bridges as an interim measure. Mr. Kolberg noted that no option has been removed from consideration. Secretary Flanagan did add that the Maryland General Assembly has prohibited spending any money to study ferry service options.

#### **5. Travel Demand and Highway Infrastructure Issues (Neil Pedersen)**

Neil Pedersen, Administrator of the Maryland State Highway Administration, noted a key element in this project is the approach roadways. Evaluating each of the four zones as for a new Bay crossing involves more than bridge structural issues. Each zone can divert a portion of bridge traffic but capacity remains restricted at the approach through Annapolis and the existing bridges. Mr. Pedersen prefaced his presentation by saying he would present the facts as objectively as possible without making conclusions about the data. Task Force members must draw their own conclusions. The capacity of the existing Bay Bridge is 82,000 vehicles per day and the projected demand is 135,000 vehicles per day by 2025. The approach roadways can support 6,000 vehicles per hour in one direction but the bridge spans can handle much less (1,200 vehicles per lane per hour but this capacity is less during contra flow operations). Mr. Pedersen emphasized that average daily trips identified during the origin-destination traffic studies do not take into account changes in land use as a result of a new bridge.

Truck traffic is a noted safety issue. Senator Pipkin noted that truck traffic on the Eastern Shore is 14 percent, almost four times the statewide average. Trucks avoiding weight stations on I-95 could be a factor.

Each of the four zones has unique social, environmental and construction issues. Zone 1 could include a tie-in to I-695 in Baltimore County. Zone 1 in Kent County could include extensive upgrade to existing rural roads or a new roadway to connect to US 301. Such an upgrade would contrast with the rural setting and agricultural land uses.

Senator Pipkin asked for a general cost of an 18-20 mile roadway. Mr. Pedersen said the best he could give would be rough estimates to construct types of roadway; \$100 million per mile in urban areas and \$30 - \$50 million in rural areas over dry land. The MdTA will provide more detailed information, if it is available, to the Task Force at Meeting #3.

In Zone 2 a new crossing would require increasing capacity of existing roadways, US 50, I-97 and MD 2 on the Western Shore and US 301 and MD 404 on the Eastern Shore. In Anne Arundel County, US 50 through Annapolis is already a point of congestion. A third span near



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the existing Bay Bridge crossing would create traffic volumes through Annapolis comparable to I-495 through Rock Creek Park.

A new crossing in Zone 3 would require extensive upgrades to MD 4 from MD 260 to I-495 and extensive upgrades to MD 260 or a new roadway. On the Eastern Shore, a crossing in Zone 3 would require a new limited access roadway from Knapps Narrows to US 50, passing through sensitive environmental areas.

A crossing in Zone 4 would require upgrades to major feeder roads including MD 2/4, US 301, MD 231 on the Western Shore and MD 16, US 50 and MD 335 on the Eastern Shore. The Western Shore would require adding additional lanes to MD 4 and upgrading access controls from Prince Frederick to I-495. On the Eastern Shore, 16 miles of upgrade to MD 16 or creation of a new roadway would be required to reach US 50. Much of Dorchester County is wetlands.

#### **6. Preview of Meeting #3 (Jim Lighthizer)**

Mr. Lighthizer introduced the topics for Meeting #3 (to be held on August 10, 2005); a review of Meeting # 2, summary of Maryland's environmental goals, types of environmental resources in each zone, a review of the regulatory process and coordination with local, state and federal agencies.

#### **7. Closing and Questions (Jim Lighthizer)**

Mr. Lighthizer opened the floor to questions.

Noting that US 50 near Annapolis will still reduce capacity, Senator Stoltzfus asked if improvements to US 50 are planned. Mr. Pedersen explained that no improvements are in project planning and that if such a project were proposed it would face significant controversy.

Delegate O'Donnell asked if the toll plaza could be moved to the westbound bridge. Mr. Pedersen explained that the MD 8 interchange and existing wetlands make this difficult but also would not provide significant capacity.

Senator Pipkin asked what would happen if every vehicle used *E-ZPass*<sup>SM</sup>. Mr. Pedersen believed this would only increase capacity by at most 10 percent.